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Crowd Foils Cuban Kidnapping

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MADRID, Dec. 13 — Four Cuban Embassy employees tried to kidnap a former Cuban official here today but were foiled when about 30 bystanders intervened, the police said.

The four embassy employees, including a vice consul waving a pistol, were arrested after the bystanders and a passing taxi blocked the Cubans' car and helped the former official to escape, the police said.

The police identified the former official as Manuel Antonio Sánchez Pérez and said he had been a senior economic official in the Government of Fidel Castro. Spanish Interior Ministry officials said that he had asked for political asylum 10 days ago during a stopover en route to East Berlin and that it had been provisionally granted.

His exact position in the Castro Government, however, remained unclear. Western intelligence sources here said the kidnapping attempt indicated that Mr. Sánchez, 50 years old, was more than an economist. Cuban exiles here said he had been involved in political infighting inside the Castro Government and may have had delicate intelligence information.

Spanish Government Angered

Spanish Foreign Ministry officials said the attempted kidnapping had angered the Government of Prime Minister Felipe González, which until now has maintained cordial relations with Cuba.

The Cuban Ambassador to Spain, Oscar García Fernández, was summoned to the Foreign Ministry tonight, moments after Foreign Minister Francisco Fernández Ordóñez returned

from an official visit to Brussels, ministry officials said. A formal protest was being considered, ministry officials said.

[An Interior Ministry spokesman said Spain plans to expel the four, The Associated Press reported.]

"You can't walk around brandishing pistols on the streets of Madrid," said one spokesman. "We're taking this as a grave incident."

Cuban Embassy officials refused to comment.

'They're Killing Me!'

The police identified the four foiled kidnapers as Vice Consul Angel Alberto León Cervantes; Abelardo López Hernández and Ramón Burroto Chávez, clerks, and Ventura Ventura Torrientes, a teacher. The four were said by bystanders to be young men.

According to the Cuban exile sources, Mr. López worked as a press analyst and Mr. Burroto and Mr. Ventura worked for Cuban intelligence.

The police said Mr. Sánchez emerged at 10:40 A.M. from a bank branch on the Paseo Castellana, a broad, tree-lined boulevard, when he was assaulted.

According to witnesses interviewed by EFE, the Spanish news agency, three of the would-be kidnapers began beating Mr. Sánchez as he resisted being shoved into a car waiting at the entrance to the bank's garage.

His screams of "They're killing me! They're killing me!" alerted bank door attendants and a sidewalk kiosk owner. By the time the assailants got Mr. Sánchez into the car, a crowd had gathered.

'Important Documents'

According to the police, the vice consul and another of the assailants waved pistols and said they were police agents.

But their unorthodox methods and Mr. Sánchez's continued screams apparently persuaded the onlookers otherwise. A passing taxi pulled in front of the car and with the crowd blocked its exit.

Mr. Sánchez was pulled from the car and ran back into the bank. The police arrived moments later.

Inside the bank, Mr. Sánchez was still clutching the briefcase he had when he was seized. Witnesses said he was nervous and shaking. They said he told bank employees: "I carry very important documents. I don't care about the money."

The Cuban exile sources said he had just withdrawn about \$800 from the bank.